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THE
Human Barometer:
OR,
Living Weather-Glass
A
PHILOSOPHICK POEM.

By Mr. PHELPS.

————— *Et, quæ Natura negabat
Visibus humanis, Oculis ea Pectoris hausit.*

Ovid.



L O N D O N:

Printed for M. Cooper, in Pater-Noster-Row. 1743.

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THE P R E F A C E.



THE Faculty of Language whereby we are capable of imparting our Ideas to each other on the various Subjects that affect either the material or spiritual Part of our Composition, is one of the most admirable, and, if rightly exercised, the most useful Capacities with which the Human Nature is enriched by the great Creator.

Reason indeed, or the Power of perceiving and reflecting upon the vast Variety of Ideas that present themselves to our Senses, and arise from the innumerable Objects that surround us, and the Observations we make upon these external Objects that are visible to our Eyes, or are the Subjects of our other Senses, together with the Reflections we are capable of making upon the internal Operations of our Minds, and the moral Principles which naturally result from such a progressive Exercise of our intellectual Powers, and are accompanied with a very clear and convictive

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Evidence of our being the Subjects of a Multitude of moral Obligations : Reason, I say, or the Capacity of deducing the most useful and important Consequences from the Objects which by Sensation are represented to us, or from the mental Operations which we experience ourselves to be possessed of, would afford a very powerful Argument to excite the Gratitude of every Individual that should participate of such excellent Endowments.

But as nothing is more separable in our Ideas than the Powers of Sensation and Reasoning, and that of communicating our Ideas to each other, let it be supposed that such a Species of Beings as Man existed, with all the Advantages of an intelligent and animal Nature, whilst at the same Time he is unprovided with the Means of imparting his Ideas to others, or of receiving theirs from them, it will appear, that in Comparison of his present Situation, his Condition would be very disconsolate and imperfect.

Tho' I would not chuse to express myself as many have done, that Man is naturally a social Being, it being a Way of speaking which I apprehend not to be strictly philosophical and correct, tho' perhaps they may intend to convey the same Idea thereby, I would rather say, that from the Structure of the human Composition, the manifold Necessities of the animal Nature, the great Advantages that will accrue to every Individual from a sincere Endeavour to afford mutual Advice and Assistance to each other, the vast Improvement of the rational Faculty itself, and the Enlargement of our Ideas of Right and Wrong, of Good and Evil, as they may be applied to the Supply of the numerous Exigencies of the Body or the Soul ; from these Considerations it is abundantly manifest, that next to the Enjoyment of Reason itself, the Ability of communicating our Thoughts is of all others most desirable, and that without such a Capacity, we must have been in great Measure destitute of the numberless Benefits of a social Life, and the human State of Existence would have been an almost insupportable Scene of melancholy Solitude.

From

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From these Premises, as well as from the essential Perfections of the Giver, it follows, that we are obliged to use this most invaluable Faculty with a sincere Endeavour to answer those great and excellent Purposes, for which it is bestowed upon us, thereby to carry on a sociable, beneficial, and benevolent Intercourse of good Offices one amongst another, to promote Truth, Justice, and the publick Good, to advance useful Knowledge and Literature, to administer Comfort to the Distressed, and Encouragement to the Deserving, to discourage and remonstrate against Folly and Vice, and hereby make it the Vehicle of universal Happiness.

Deformity being the Reverse of Beauty, the Representation of the Original and proper Design of Language will easily point out the Corruptions and Abuses of it, I shall here touch upon none of the Particulars but what relate to Poetical Compositions, and the same Thing is to be pronounced of Poetry, as of Prose, that it is no further justifiable, than as it is adapted to promote useful Knowledge, or moral Practise; an obvious Question may here arise, Whether it be not allowable to write merely to divert or amuse? To this I answer, I would by no Means condemn an Author for endeavouring to divert his Readers, but I very much doubt whether it be possible to offer any Composition to the Publick that is absolutely of an indifferent Kind, I think I may venture to assert that it is not practicable to write in such a Manner as to strike the Imagination and move the Passions, without inciting the Mind either to Good or Evil, there must necessarily be some Principle or other, either more explicitly advanc'd, or tacitly implied, which will tend to recommend or discountenance some Virtue or Vice: But not to insist upon the abstracted Idea, and allowing in general of every Poem, that as far as it is innocent it is defensible, there are but too great a Number that are manifestly injurious to Truth, Modesty, and every other Virtue; even in many of our Theatrical Compositions, the most vicious Characters, and such as are most remarkably destructive of social Happiness, instead of being painted out in the most detestable Colours, are represented only as the Airs of a polite Gentleman, or fine Lady, whilst Chastity, Industry, and Justice, are ridiculed as dull, mechanick, and ungentleman-like Qualities. And so far have these wretched Cautes been productive of their natural Effect, that

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that the best of our Tragedies, tho' many of them are equal to the most celebrated Productions of the Ancients, will not go down with the fine People of the present Age, nor will the Actors venture to exhibit them, without the Addition of some *Scaramouch*, *Harlequin*, vulgar Piece of low *Mimickry*, call'd, according to the present delicious Taste, *An ENTERTAINMENT*. Thus no longer since than *January 29*. the *Siege of Damascus* could not be ventur'd upon the Strength of its own Merit, but was coupled up with the *Rape of Proserpine*, and the *Birth and Adventures of Harlequin*, and *February 4*. *Cato* was for his Security attended by the *Dragon of Wantley*. Antick Dances, Leaping, a Stroke of *Harlequin's* Wooden Sword, and all Manner of stupid Buffoonry supply the Place of true Wit and solid Reason: So that as far as this mean and vitiated Taste prevails, which, Thanks be given, is not as yet become Epidemical, I must give up such of my Countrymen as are sunk into it to that Censure of Mr. *Voltaire*, which appeared in the Preface to the first Edition of his Letters concerning the *English Nation*, that the *English* of the present Age are no more like their Ancestors an hundred Years ago than the modern *Italians* are like the antient *Romans*. Just such a Taste as this prevail'd amongst the *Romans* about the Time of the Declension of their antient Greatness, at which *Horace* expresses a very just Indignation in the two following Lines.

*Verum Equitis quoque jam migravit ab Aure Voluptas
Omnis ad incertos Oculos et Gaudia vana.*

Which as spoken of the then, or as applicable to the present Times may be rendered into *English* thus.

*Instructive Scenes our modern Qual. refuse,
The present Age delights in empty shows.*

And as I fear the Bulk of the present Generation are justly liable to *Horace's* Reproach, I heartily wish it may not prove a Prefage of the like Degeneracy and Ruin which followed then, and from the greatest and bravest People in the World reduced them to the tamest and most abject Slaves.

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The Subject of the following Poem is the Influence of the Atmosphere upon the Human Frame, according to the Differences of its Gravity or Lightness, Heat or Cold, Dryness or Moisture, as these Effects are produced by various Seasons, or, as far as appears to us, the various accidental Alterations that occur, tho' in Reality they ought not to be called by that Name, but to be accounted, as they really are, the Operations of Him who by His All-wise Providence governs the World which he hath made. The Influence of the different Degrees of Gravity, and the other Alterations in the Properties of the Air abovementioned, are productive of proportionable Variations in the Habit and Constitution of the Human Body; and so intimate tho' inexplicable is the Union betwixt Soul and Body, that the Soul is very sensibly affected by the Impressions it receives from its material Partner; and, on the other Hand, the Body is reciprocally affected by the Impulse of the Passions and Ideas of the Mind: So that as Man is a complex Being consisting of Matter and Spirit, and the Connection betwixt these two different Parts whereof he is compounded, is so close and inseparable, during the Continuance of their mutual Relation to each other, that the Soul on the one Hand experiences either Pleasure or Pain, is either quickened or retarded in its own peculiar Operations of Perception and Reasoning, according to the different State and Circumstances of the corporeal Vehicle which it inhabits, and on the other Hand the Body is as much affected in its animal Function, by the Impressions that are made upon it by the Reflections and Passions of the Soul, and, in Consequence hereof, is either healthy and vigorous, or weak and languishing.

From these Observations which have their Foundation in Truth and Nature, the Conclusion I aim at rises with demonstrative Light and Evidence, that human Virtue consisteth in a sincere Endeavour, by the proper Exercise of the rational Faculties, to maintain a regular and watchful Government over those Impulses which are made upon the Soul, by the Sensations which it receives from the Instrumentality of the Body, and to restrain and balance the Passions and Operations of the Mind; so that they may not be prejudicial to bodily Activity and Health; and nothing but

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a Life of Temperance and Virtue can be a sufficient Antidote against the numerous Evils that are incident either to the Body or the Mind.

With an unfeigned View to the Promotion of these great Ends, I offer this short Essay to the Publick, the Philosophical and Moral Principles which it contains are founded on Truth and Experience. These Principles I have endeavoured to put into a Poetical Dress, with a Design to promote the Knowledge, Health, and Virtue of my Fellow-mortals, and if upon Perusal it be found to contribute in any Measure to the Entertainment of the thoughtful Reader, my End will be answered.


J. P.



THE



THE
Human Barometer:
OR,
Living Weather-Glass.

HEN on my Mind I turn my studious Eye,
The secret Springs of Nature to descry ;
If to explore the mystick Bands I strive,
By which conjoin'd the Soul and Body live ;
How from this Union Thoughts, Ideas rise,
Or from what Source Sensation multiplies ?

How Motion from the Will derives its Cause,
Or mental Acts can give the Body Laws?
The conscious Soul ingenuous, to explain
Owens to attempt, would fruitless be and vain :
Constant Experience full Conviction brings,
That Motion from the Soul's Volition springs,
That all th' ideal Treasures of the Mind
Have Sense for their Original I find ;
But how their mutual Influence they impart,
And each reciprocally acts its Part :
Matter to Spirit Images conveys,
And, in its Turn, the Soul's Commands obeys,
These Thoughts my Soul with Admiration fill,
The Mode I know not, but I FEEL, I WILL.

The perfect Knowledge of the human Frame
Is only his from whom all BEING came ;

The ESSENCES of Things HE only knows,
By whose creative Power all NATURE rose ;
The human Mind to Properties extends
Its View, Effects, not Causes comprehends :
Since then th' internal Cause I can't attain,
Some circumstantial Knowledge let me gain ;
With outward Objects I'll myself compare,
And the Relations which to me they bear,
I'll seek to find. Thou first salut'ft mine Eye,
Effulgent Luminary of the Sky,
Thy Light I see, I feel thy Genial Heat,
Of senseless Matter, Work the most complete ;
Thy Rays diffuse their vital Influence round ;
They light the Air, and fertilize the Ground :
The rising Sun produces chearful Day,
Chasing the Sable Gloom of Night away ;

Air, Earth and Sea, are subject to its Sway,
And Power divine in it display'd obey.
Hence watry Particles obsequious rise,
Floating in Air the Cloud prolifick flies,
Till by the Wind condens'd it falls in Showers,
And with its Drops the Means of Plenty pours ;
The airy Fluid hence its Laws receives,
Its different Motions Rarefaction gives.
Thus from its * annual Course, and native Heat,
The various Seasons still themselves repeat.
Winter, its greatest Distance cheerless mourns,
On its Approach the joyful Spring returns.
Its greater Heat Summer and Autumn gives,
And Food supplies for every Thing that lives.

On

* Annual Course, in this and the five following Lines, I do not aim to speak philosophically, with Relation to the Sun, as to its moving or standing still ; but, according to vulgar Apprehension, and supposing it should be Fact, that the Sun is rather nearer the Earth in Winter than in Summer ; yet, as the Rays falling very oblique, have nothing of the Power as when they approach much nearer to perpendicular. By Nearness or Distance, I would be understood only to mean the Sun's greater or less Degree of Power upon the Climate in which we live.

On my own Species next I meditate,
How it affects the present human State :
Pleasure or Pain its various Power excites,
Inspires the Soul with Sorrows or Delights :
The Sun gives Motion to the ambient Air,
Makes Flux and Reflux in the Atmosphere :
And as their Situation various stands,
Various Effects are brought on different Lands :
Thus do the Winds that o'er the Ocean sweep,
Protrude the Exhalations from the Deep,
Resisting Hills and Woods their Passage stop,
And into Rain and Showers, compress'd, they drop.
The self-same Cause that makes the Billows roar,
And lashes with its Waves the Eastern Shore,
Spreads Calm and Smoothness o'er the Western Coast,
This lies in Peace, whilst that's with Tempests tost ;

The

The South-wind warms us with its gentle Breeze,
Whilst Northern Blaſts will make the Waters freeze :
Hence all the Changes of ſucceeding Years,
The Face of Nature gay, or ſad appears.

Nicely compos'd is this Machine of Man,
And tho' but little in Creation's Plan ;
Yet bears Relation to the Great Immenſe,
On it their Elements their Power diſpenſe.
The pois'd *Barometer* will ſink or riſe,
In Mode proportion'd to the changing Skies,
The Air ſerene th' incloſed Mercury flows ;
And, as by Weight impell'd, it upward goes ;
But when dilated Vapours crowd the Air,
Its ſinking State will ſtraitway make appear ;
Solid and fluid Parts our Frame compoſe,
The Fluid through the denſer Solids flows.

Th' incumbent Air is Circulation's Spring,
And changes various as its Weight will bring;
The Air serene, from Clouds and Vapours clear,
Not burnt with Heat, nor chill'd with Cold severe;
Adjusts the Motion of the circling Blood,
The Pulse beats right, the Circulation's good;
Vapours and Storms aerial Weight abate,
Our Blood runs low, and languid is our State,
If Cold or Heat prevail to great Excess,
More than we ought, we then perspire or less,
Our passive Body Alterations finds,
And with our Bodies sympathize our Minds.
Connection strange, Body and Soul conjoin'd!
That senseless Matter should inform the Mind!
That Spirit and Matter bear alternate Sway!
What wills the Soul, the Members all obey!

Kindred

Kindred so near, must mutual Influence make,
Each of the other's Lot must needs partake.

Not one Sensation by the Nerves is brought,
But what with Pleasure or with Pain is fraught;
So with elastick Power the Soul reflects,
And its material Vehicle affects.
Pleasing Sensations inward Joys excite,
Corporeal Health flows from the Soul's Delight;
But when with grievous Thoughts the Mind's oppress'd,
Our Health declines, our Bodies know no Rest;
So when our Ears Tidings of Grief salute,
Our Spirits sink benumm'd, our Tongue is mute;
But welcome News will fortify the Heart,
And better Health than Medicine impart.

The Mind by Passion's Springs excited moves,
Shuns what it fears, pursues the Thing it loves,
Hopes for Obtainment, or Despairs to gain,
Regards with Gratitude, or keen Disdain;
Yet these tho' Actions of the human Mind
Are not to the internal Part confin'd,
But variously affect the Body's State,
Either impair its Health, or animate,
Gladness will Balm thro' all our Frame diffuse,
It strings our Nerves, declining Health renews.
Assists each Function of the whole Machine,
And in the Face its sparkling Power is seen.
But Sorrows opposite Effects produce,
The Stomach pall, infect the vital Juice,
Relax the Nerves, adulterate our Food,
And paint the Face with Signs of absent Good,

When kind Affections in the Soul preside,
And Love and Friendship the whole Heart divide,
Steady's the Pulse, Secretions well proceed,
And Health and Peace their genuine Fruits succeed.
If furious Anger once the Mind possess,
Internal Rule and mental Order cease,
The turgid Blood with rapid Torrent flies,
Distorts the Countenance, inflames the Eyes ;
Hope calms the Breast when adverse Billows roar,
Internal Discord then prevails no more,
With gentle Force the Heart supplies the Veins,
The Soul from Grief, the Body's free from Pains.
But when of absent Good no Hopes appear,
Or to remove our Load we quite despair,
The Spirits sink, the Soul is fill'd with Grief,
And gloomy Features prove it wants Relief.

And

And as the Body by the Mind impress'd
Either by Health or Sicknefs is possess'd,
Its Partner's various State the Spirit shares
And Good or Evil in Proportion bears ;
Fermented Air too much our Blood exhales,
Clogs Nature's Wheels, its usual Vigour fails,
Just in Proportion fares it with the Mind,
Invention low, and Judgment weak we find,
Cold when excessive closes up the Pores,
And bars the needful Perspiration Doors,
With which the Muscles strongly brac'd conspire
To kindle in the Veins a feverish Fire ;
Convulsive Nerves unhinge the inward Frame,
Disturb the Judgment and the Mind inflame,
Capricious Fancy seizes Reason's Throne,
And holds the Province due to that alone.

Hence furious Passions rage without Controul,
And Anarchy possesses all the Soul.

To such-like Causes *Bethlem* owes its Rise,
That melancholy needful Edifice,
With Mind humane attend these gloomy Scenes,
And view imaginary Kings and Queens,
Here Bile redundant overwhelms the Sense,
And black Ideas hold it in Suspence.
There agitated Juices Frenzy shows,
And Thought no Order nor Connexion knows ;
The Traveller beholds with pitying Eye,
The stately Ruins of Antiquity,
From what is left reflects what once they were,
And o'er their grand Remains lets fall a Tear,
But intellectual Ruins here are seen
A far more moving and more tragick Scene.

Now to th' adjacent Field direct thy Way,
This will the same in Miniature display,
There mounted on his Tripod *Whitfield* stands,
Silence and Awe canonick Garb commands,
With Arms extended see he apes *Saint Paul*,
And counts his own an Apostolick Call,
Gesture and Voice betray the heated Brain
In Groans his Converts eccho back again,
And Souls impress'd with Thoughts of Grace, or Sin,
Expectorate their Sense in solemn Din.*
These of enthusiastick Transports boast,
But are to Argument and Reason lost.

Of

* Solemn Din. No Person of any Curiosity can have ever been present at one of this renowned preaching Knight Errant's Field Sermons, but must have observed the Practice which is here hinted at, for whenever this notable Divine thinks fit to put a more than ordinary Emphasis upon a Sentence, or to express himself with a greater Degree of Warmth and Pathos than usual, one or other of the more Zealous Kind of Auditors, as a Sign of being uncommonly affected, vents his inward Emotion in a deep hollow groaning Sound, which spreads itself immediately amongst the Croud, and produces an universal Hum.

Of this enough----

The different Seasons join

And to produce the like Effects combine,

If Heat with Wet a due Proportion bear

They make a fruitful and an healthy Year,

Salubrious Fruits and Aliments produce,

And fill the Vessels with their wholesome Juice,

No vitiated Humours then molest,

The Blood flows easy, and the Mind's at Rest,

But when with Clouds the Atmosphere is fill'd,

And chilling Rains are on the Earth distill'd,

The sick'ning Grass pines in the flooded Field,

And Herbs and Beasts unwholesome Nurture yield,

Depraved Juices hurt the Stomach's Tone,

The Nerves grow weak, the Blood's with Bile o'erflown.

Hereby Distempers manifold are fed,

And great Disorders in the Mind are bred.

Or should no morbid Taint our Food infect
If we the Rules of Temperance neglect,
The Course of Nature we ourselves subvert,
And into Poison wholesome Food convert,
Voracious Palates crude Digestion cause,
Excess of Wine subverts sound Reason's Laws,
Clog or precipitate plain Nature's Course,
And always tend to Sicknefs or Remorse.
A brighter Scene doth Temperance display,
It calms the Night, adds Brightnefs to the Day,
Confirms the Health, invigorates the Mind,
And yields us Pleasures solid and refin'd.
But all external Impulse knows Controul,
Tho' it may try, it can't corrupt the Soul,
Material Vehicles subject to its Power
Now feel a pleasant, then a painful Hour,

But Vice and Virtue both from Freedom flow,
No other Cause than Liberty they know,
Free reasoning Agents ne'er can be compell'd,
But, when they err, to flattering Vices yield,
Evil, as Evil, always we refuse,
But, Evil, Good we call, and often chuse,
With present Impulse weakly we comply,
And flight the Thoughts of a Futurity.
But soon or late Reflection must succeed,
And pass just Sentence on the vicious Deed,
No Grief with this deserves to be compar'd,
Nor any Trouble like it to be fear'd.
From great Misfortunes Sorrow often flows,
Or cruel Injuries disturb Repose,
Painful Sensations from Diseases rise,
Hunger and Want produce Anxieties.

All these Assaults the Spirit may sustain,
And yet have Intervals exempt from Pain,
But the poor Conscience when with Guilt oppress'd
With inward Torture feels itself distress'd,
Shocks from without may Virtue bravely bear,
And Patience thro' the dashing Waves may steer,
But conscious Guilt involves the Soul in Woe,
The guilty Conscience proves its greatest Foe,
Dejection, Grief, and Self-aborrent Shame,
Infest the Mind, and quite unhinge her Frame,
Anguish, Confusion, Horror, rage within,
The bitter Fruits of aggravated Sin,
Reason with Passions, these with Reason jar,
And make the Soul a Scene of Civil War,
Alike Disorders in the Body breed,
And grievous Maladies from hence proceed.

Since then both Health and inward Peace invite,
 In Virtue's Paths let all my Powers unite,
 O teach me, Wisdom, this thy heav'nly Art,
 With virtuous Principles to guard my Heart,
 Let not the Animal reign without Controul,
 But be directed by the nobler Soul,
 O'er Sense's Motions let the Mind preside,
 Let Prudence sage with Patience coincide,
 And of my Soul the total Rule divide,
 Then will the proper Balance be maintain'd,
 When Sense by Reason's Dictates is restrain'd,
 When present Objects future Hopes o'erfway,
 And Thought to Action still directs the Way.
 No different Course can give the Soul Relief,
 In Calms of Pleasure, or in Storms of Grief,
 Pleasure may Syren-like enchant the Ears,
 And with dissembling Arts extend her Snares,

But watchful Virtue will the Soul alarm,
 And her pernicious Artifice disarm,
 In vain Misfortune lows with Savage Frown,
 To ruffle inward Peace and cast me down,
 Virtue will teach its Aspect not to fear,
 And future Hopes will soon the Prospect clear.
 This salutary Lesson let me learn
 May I my Soul's true Interest discern,
 Let Fortune then with Smiles my Mind caress,
 Or frowning threaten Danger and Distress,
 Health shall not tempt me to neglect my Guard,
 And Virtue need not even by Death be scar'd.
 The * ancient Poet taught by Nature's Laws,
 With noblest Elegance pleads Virtue's Cause,

Sublimely

* Antient Poet. These concluding Lines are rather an Imitation than a Translation of *Horace, Carmin. Lib. III. Ode III.*

Justam & tenacem Propositi Virum,——
Si fractus Alacatur Orbis,
Impavidum ferient Ruine.

And

Sublimely sings----The Man of Soul sincere :
 Triumphs in Hope, is undismay'd by Fear,
 Should even this Orb to its first Chaos turn,
 Or in one total Conflagration burn,
 Involv'd in Ruin tho' the Body die,
 The Soul survives and mounts above the Sky.

And I am not afraid to say that in this excellent Composition he appears to have been in a very different, and infinitely more amiable Disposition of Mind, than in many others of his Odes, where he drops the Character of the polite Gentleman and the fine Writer, in low Obscenity, or Epicurean Licentiousness, I would add, that when he is here describing, in such just and elevated Terms, the Happiness of a virtuous Life, as being capable by the inward Consolations arising from a Consciousness of it, to animate a Man against the Evils of Life, and even to fortify and compose his Breast in the Midst of a dissolving World, I cannot but think he must at that Time be under the strongest Impressions of the Belief of a future Existence, as nothing else could support a Man in the Circumstances of Death, and the universal Wreck of Matter, but such a Belief, and the Hope of Happiness in a future State.

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